



THANDA SAFARI
PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

Thanda Safari Factsheet

Thanda Safari

A Luxury Game Reserve in the Heart of Zululand



Property Overview

Thanda Safari is an exclusive retreat set within a private Big Five game reserve in northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Established in 2002, the 16,500-hectare reserve honours the Zulu philosophy of Ubuntu, a deep-rooted belief in interconnectedness, reverence for nature, and the strength of community.

Located in the heart of historic Zululand, once the realm of King Shaka, this remarkable destination offers an unforgettable safari experience surrounded by abundant wildlife, sweeping landscapes, and the signature warmth of Thanda hospitality.



Accessibility

Thanda Safari can be easily reached from two major international airports: OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg and King Shaka International Airport in Durban. These airports are well connected to key international hubs in the US, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, providing easy access for guests traveling to the game reserve.

From OR Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg

Charter Plane

A fixed-wing charter or scheduled plane can be taken to Mkuze Airport (approximately 45 minutes), followed by a 20-minute road transfer to the reserve.

Alternatively, a flight can be arranged to Richards Bay Airport (around 1 hour 10 minutes), with a 1 hour 30-minute road transfer to the reserve.

From King Shaka International Airport, Durban

By Helicopter

A one-hour helicopter flight offers a quick route directly to the reserve, offering a scenic view along the North Coast, including the historic Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve.

By Road

The three-hour drive from Durban follows the N2 and D242 roads. A 2 km runway for private jets is planned within the reserve.

Private Jet

Guests arriving by private jet can land at Mkuze Airport, which has a 2 km runway, followed by a 20-minute road transfer to the reserve. However, guests will need to first clear customs at Durban or Johannesburg Airports.



Helicopter Arrival



Views from Villa Thandawena

Did You Know?

Cultural Legacy

Thanda Safari is intrinsically connected to Zulu heritage and incorporates the Mduna Royal Reserve held in trust by the Zulu King. Wildlife roams freely between the two areas, reinforcing conservation initiatives with the community.

Conservation First

The reserve is actively involved in wildlife conservation, research, and community empowerment through initiatives like 'Star for Life' and wildlife breeding programmes.

Accommodation

There are four exclusive accommodation options available at Thanda Safari.

- The Royal Residences are privately owned villas located within the Royal Thanda Club Estate, a 386-hectare game-fenced area within the reserve, offering complete privacy and luxury.
- Villa iZulu, independently situated in the wider game reserve, provides seclusion and serenity in the owner's original homestead.
- Thanda Safari Lodge offers a classic safari experience with nine private suites, world-class service, and sweeping views over the reserve.

- Thanda Tented Camp features 15 luxury safari tents, including the special, larger Jabula Tent, ideal for honeymooners or families, combining intimate comfort with an authentic bush experience.

Big Five

Home to Africa's iconic big five - elephant, rhino, lion, leopard, and buffalo - as well as hyena, cheetah and a variety of plains game, Thanda Safari offers exceptional wildlife viewing across the 16,500-hectare game reserve.

Beach and Bush

With easy access by road or helicopter to stunning beaches along the East Coast of South Africa and Mozambique, guests can experience the best of beach and bush.

Best Time to Go

Summer Rainfall occurs between October and March, peaking in January with day/night temperatures between 22 - 33°C, while winters are dry with day/night temperatures ranging between 12 - 22°C.

Thanda Tented Camp

Located within the Thanda Private Game Reserve, Thanda Tented Camp offers an intimate and immersive safari experience that blends classic tented living with understated comfort. Designed for guests seeking a closer connection to nature, the camp delivers privacy, tranquillity, and timeless safari charm.

The camp features 15 luxury safari tents, each thoughtfully positioned for seclusion and bush views. Every tent opens onto a private deck and includes an en-suite canvas bathroom, with select tents offering indoor and outdoor shower options.

At the heart of the camp is a relaxed communal area with a main dining tent, Hemingway-style lounge, rim-flow swimming pool, and spa tent. The Jabula Tent, a larger and more secluded option with a private plunge pool, is ideal for honeymooners or families seeking an elevated tented escape.

Highlights	
Tent size	155sqm to 175sqm
Occupancy	30
Royal Club Estate	No
5 En-suite bedrooms	Yes
Helipad	No
Communal Rim flow pool	Yes
Jacuzzi (Jabula Tent only)	Yes
Premium wine cellar	No
Library	No
Remote office facilities	No
Bar	Yes
Boma dining	Yes
Fire pit	Yes
Viewing deck over watering hole	Yes
Semi-fully hosted	Yes
Open-top safari vehicle	Yes

Amenities	
Air conditioning	No
Mosquito nets	Yes
Free standing bath	Some
Indoor & outdoor shower	Yes
Double vanity	Yes
Private en-suite veranda	Yes
In-room safe	Yes
WiFi	Public Areas
Multi-adaptor electricity (220V)	Yes
Telephone	No
Executive chef, butler, manager and host	Yes
Hairdryer	Yes
Laundry service	No
Spa therapists	By appointment
Childminding services	Available on request



Thanda Tented Camp



The Jabula Tent



Communal Area



Thanda Safari Lodge



Interior



Private Splash Pool

Thanda Safari Lodge

Thanda Safari Lodge offers an elegant safari retreat with nine spacious, self-contained suites, each designed for privacy, comfort, and immersion in the surrounding wilderness. Every suite features a generous living area, a heated plunge pool, and an outdoor sala overlooking the reserve.

The circular architecture of the suites pays homage to traditional Zulu homesteads, blending cultural heritage with contemporary luxury. Suites are carefully spaced to ensure seclusion while maintaining a sense of connection to the lodge.

The lodge’s central dining and gathering area includes an inviting lounge, expansive deck, and library overlooking a waterhole, alongside a private business area, cigar bar, and impressive wine cellar.

A dedicated spa offers a range of treatments in tranquil therapy rooms or outdoor sala spaces with sweeping reserve views. Therapists are trained in both Western techniques and ancient Zulu holistic practices, providing a deeply restorative experience.

Highlights	
Lodge size	220 sqm
Occupancy	18
Royal Club Estate	No
En-suite bedroom	Yes
Helipad	No
Private Splash pool	Yes
Premium wine cellar	Yes
Library	Yes
Remote office facilities	Yes
Bar	Yes
Boma dining	Yes
Fire pit	Yes
Viewing deck over watering hole	Yes
Fully hosted	Yes
Open-top safari vehicle	Yes

Amenities	
Air conditioning	Yes
Mosquito nets	Yes
Free standing bath	Yes
Indoor & outdoor shower	Yes
Double vanity	Yes
Private en-suite veranda	Yes
In-room safe	Yes
WiFi	Yes
Multi-adaptor electricity (220V)	Yes
Telephone	Yes
Executive chef, butler, manager and host	Yes
Hairdryer	Yes
Laundry service	Yes
Spa therapists	By appointment
Childminding services	Available on request

Villa iZulu

Villa iZulu, the Thanda owners’ original homestead, is situated in a game-fenced enclave within the main reserve. It features exclusive views over a watering hole frequented by a variety of wildlife, including the Big Five. A sanctuary for those seeking serenity and adventure in the heart of Africa, it offers expansive indoor and outdoor living spaces, a gourmet kitchen, library, swimming pool, boma, and private helipad.

Five lavish en-suite rooms graciously accommodate up to 10 guests, with two twin suites with twin beds, and three double suites with extra-large king-size beds, each with a private veranda. Guests have exclusive use of the expansive garden and a dedicated open-top safari vehicle, expert guide and tracker, as well as the personalised services of a private chef, villa manager, and host staff, inviting guests to experience African generosity at its finest.

Highlights		Amenities	
Villa size	850 sqm	Air conditioning	Yes
Occupancy	10	Mosquito nets	Yes
Royal Club Estate	No	Free standing bath	Yes
5 En-suite bedrooms	Yes	Indoor & outdoor shower	Yes
Helipad	Yes	Double vanity	Yes
Rim flow pool	Yes	Private en-suite veranda	Yes
Jacuzzi	Yes	In-room safe	Yes
Premium wine cellar	Yes	WiFi	Yes
Library	Yes	Multi-adaptor electricity (220V)	Yes
Remote office facilities	Yes	Telephone	Yes
Bar	Yes	Executive chef, butler, manager and host	Yes
Boma dining	Yes	Hairdryer	Yes
Fire pit	Yes	Laundry service	Yes
Viewing deck over watering hole	Yes	Spa therapists	By appointment
Fully hosted	Yes	Childminding services	Available on request
Private open-top safari vehicle	Yes		



Villa iZulu



Grand Royal Residence



Firepit & viewing deck



Swedish Hästens beds

5 Bedroom Grand Royal Residence

Discover Villa Thandawena, the flagship Royal Residence, an inspired, five-bedroom contemporary residence with a private helipad and Airbus H 130 B4 private helicopter, perched effortlessly atop the endless southern foothills of the Great African Rift Valley. An exquisite space where ancient stone and textured leathers complement glass and steel, and a floating butterfly roof invites natural light and ventilation for a gentle footprint on the earth.

With five en-suite bedrooms, each featuring master crafted Hästens beds, including the main suite’s exceptional Hästens Grand Vividus, Villa iZulu offers a thoroughly royal experience. Highlights include a grand royal lounge, cigar lounge, bar lounge, indoor and outdoor dining areas, infinity pool and jacuzzi, expansive viewing deck, a sauna with Himalayan salt wall, boma, fire pit, pop-up outdoor gym, and a tranquil relaxation sala.

All stays include an expert safari guide, tracker, and open-top game viewing vehicle, wilderness walks within the Royal Thanda Club Estate, as well as private helicopter airport transfers, making for an unforgettable VIP safari adventure.

Highlights	
Villa size	1,087 sqm
Occupancy	10
Royal Club Estate	Yes
Airbus H 130 B4 helicopter & Helipad	Yes
5 En-suite bedrooms	Yes
Rim flow pool & jacuzzi	Yes
Himalayan salt sauna	Yes
Premium wine cellar	Yes
Bar & Cigar Lounge	Yes
Boma dining	Yes
Fire pit	Yes
Viewing deck	Yes
Yoga deck	Yes
Romantic resting sala	Yes
Pop-up gym	Yes
Fully hosted	Yes
Private open-top safari vehicle	Yes
Private bush dining site & romantic dining site	Yes

Amenities	
Air conditioning	Yes
Mosquito nets	Yes
Swedish Hastens beds throughout	Yes
Free standing bath	Yes
Indoor double shower	Yes
Double vanity	Yes
Private en-suite verandas	Yes
Minibar	Yes
In-room safe	Yes
WiFi	Yes
Integrated sound system	Yes
Multi-adaptor electricity (220V)	Yes
Laundry service	Yes
Panic room	Available on request
Mood lighting control	Yes
Executive chef, butler, host & manager	Yes
Spa therapists	By appointment

4 Bedroom Deluxe Royal Residence

Drawing inspiration from the symbolic circular design of ‘Umuzi,’ meaning homestead in isiZulu, this residence incorporates aesthetic aspects of traditional storytelling and African culture in the architectural style and design.

Furnished for supreme comfort and enriched by warm African hospitality, the four en-suite bedrooms with private verandas, seamless indoor-outdoor living areas, and a curated wine cellar invite guests to connect and unwind in this effortlessly flowing space.

Step outside to survey the sweeping views of the surrounding terrain, relax or do yoga at the secluded sala, gather around the elegant fire pit area for canapes at sundown, and dine under the stars in the boma.

A dedicated open-top game viewing vehicle with an expert safari guide and tracker ensures an exceptional VIP safari experience.

Highlights	
Villa size	880 sqm
Occupancy	8
Royal Club Estate	Yes
4 En-suite Bedrooms	Yes
Rim flow pool & jacuzzi	Yes
Premium wine Ccellar	Yes
Bar	Yes
Boma dining	Yes
Fire pit	Yes
Viewing deck	Yes
Yoga pavilion / sala	Yes
Fully hosted	Yes
Private open-top safari vehicle	Yes

Amenities	
Air conditioning	Yes
Mosquito nets	Yes
Free standing bath	Yes
Indoor & outdoor shower	Yes
Double vanity	Yes
Private en-suite verandas	Yes
In-room minibar	Yes
In-room Safe	Yes
WiFi	Yes
Multi-adaptor electricity (220V)	Yes
Telephone	Yes
Hairdryer	Yes
Executive chef, butler and host	Yes
Laundry service	Yes
Spa therapists	By appointment
Childminding services	Available on request



Exterior View



Lounge



En-suite bathrooms



Ultimate privacy and endless views



Lounge



Bedroom Interior

4 Bedroom Royal Residence

Designed as a private sanctuary, this residence offers the utmost seclusion, refined service, and exclusive access to curated safari experiences. Accents of traditional Zulu-inspired architecture celebrate the harmony between expansive living spaces and the natural surroundings, framed by a rim flow pool, jacuzzi, viewing deck, fire pit, and boma.

Four en-suite bedrooms with private verandas invite restful retreat, while a private chef, butler, dedicated host, and expert safari team are on hand to tailor every element of the stay. Whether exploring the estate on foot or the reserve in a private open-top vehicle, each moment is thoughtfully crafted for personalisation and discovery.

Highlights	
Villa size	587 sqm
Occupancy	8
Royal Club Estate	Yes
4 En-suite bedrooms	Yes
Rim flow pool & jacuzzi	Yes
Boma dining	Yes
Fire pit	Yes
Viewing deck	Yes
Fully hosted	Yes
Private open-top safari vehicle	Yes

Amenities	
Air conditioning	Yes
Mosquito nets	Yes
Free standing bath	Yes
Indoor & outdoor shower	Yes
Double vanity	Yes
Private en-suite verandas	Yes
In-room minibar	Yes
In-room safe	Yes
WiFi	Yes
Multi-adaptor electricity (220V)	Yes
Telephone	Yes
Hairdryer	Yes
Executive chef, butler and host	Yes
Laundry service	Yes
Spa therapists	By appointment
Childminding services	Available on request

2 or 3 Bedroom Royal Residences

A tailor-made offering for smaller groups seeking an exclusive stay at a Royal Residence. A flexible configuration accommodates a family that only requires two or three individual suites of a four-bedroom villa, while maintaining exclusive-use access to the villa’s full amenities.

Spacious and elegantly appointed living areas open onto a wide viewing deck and infinity pool, providing uninterrupted vistas of the estate. A private haven of serenity, complemented by the superior services of an executive chef, butler, dedicated guide, tracker, and game drive vehicle, ensures a truly exceptional VIP safari experience.

Highlights	
Room size	57-73 sqm
Occupancy	4-6
Royal Club Estate	Yes
2 or 3 En-suite bedrooms	Yes
Rim flow pool & jacuzzi	Yes
Bar	Yes
Wine cellar	Yes
Boma dining	Yes
Fire pit	Yes
Viewing deck	Yes
Fully hosted	Yes
Private open-top safari vehicle	Yes

Amenities	
Air conditioning	Yes
Mosquito nets	Yes
Free standing bath	Yes
Indoor & outdoor shower	Yes
Double vanity	Yes
Private en-suite verandas	Yes
In-room minibar	Yes
In-room safe	Yes
WiFi	Yes
Multi-adaptor electricity (220V)	Yes
Telephone	Yes
Executive chef, butler and host	Yes
Hairdryer	Yes
Laundry service	Yes
Spa therapists	By appointment
Childminding services	Available on request



Lounge



Bedroom Interior



Swimming pool & jacuzzi

Architecture and Design

Traditions Meet Contemporary Elegance

The thoughtfully designed Royal Residences offer a choice between traditional and contemporary styles, incorporating local materials to complement the surrounding landscape.

Spacious interiors, soaring ceilings, and expansive windows flood the spaces with natural light, effortlessly linking indoor and outdoor living.



Contemporary Design



Traditional Design

Dining

Experience personalised hospitality and exquisite cuisine at Thanda Safari, where an executive chef, butler, and host craft personalised gourmet menus that celebrate unique African flavours that cater to all dietary needs and are paired with carefully selected wines and beverages.

Specialities include al-fresco breakfasts, bush dining, fire-lit boma dinners, delicious high teas and curated sundowners, surrounded by the stunning views and wildlife of the reserve.



Exquisite Cuisine



Personalised Hospitality



Romantic Set Up below World's View



Weddings in the wild

Marriages and Celebrations

The game reserve is called Thanda for a very good reason. Meaning ‘love’ in isiZulu, it represents the heart and soul of passion, and the spirit of togetherness.

Couples can hold their wedding ceremony in a sheltered bush location under the Marula marriage trees, with plains game observing from a distance. Guests can celebrate their wedding reception safari-style, in a star-lit boma, on a deck overlooking the African wilderness, or at Villa iZulu, with Zulu warriors and singers blessing the occasion. Small to large groups of 150 guests or more can be accommodated.

Engagements, anniversaries, birthdays, and all other celebrations can be joyously experienced in this unforgettable setting, immortalising a truly unique and memorable experience for all.



Ceremony at Villa Thandawena



Ceremony at Villa Thandawena

Safari Experiences

On-property

Big Five Safari
Encounter lion, elephant, rhino, leopard, and buffalo on game drives led by expert guides and trackers in a 16,500-hectare private reserve.

Rhino Conservation*
Embark on a rare conservation experience with expert trackers and veterinarians to locate, dart, and monitor rhinos in a vital mission to safeguard them from poaching.

**Seasonal*

Bush Walk*
Immerse in nature with guided walks, learning about local plants, animals, and ecosystems. Enjoy the freedom of wilderness walks within the fenced Royal Thanda Estate.

**Seasonal*

Cheetah Tracking
Track cheetahs across open terrain as you explore the complexities of their behaviour and the critical work being done to protect them.

Zulu Culture
Explore Zulu heritage through village visits, historical sites, and community engagement.

Wildlife Conservation
Play a hands-on role in preserving nature’s wonders, working alongside the reserve’s conservationists to monitor and protect native species.

Children’s Activities
Young explorers can embark on the Junior Rangers Course, where hands-on adventures spark a deeper understanding of wildlife, conservation, and the natural world.

Additional Activities
From photography workshops and guided birdwatching to restorative spa rituals and private yoga sessions, enjoy tailored experiences including kosher cuisine, fireside storytelling, open-air cinema, bush dining, and more.



Big Five Safari



Bush Walks



Zulu Warriors



Horseback Safari



Beach Fish Barbeque

Safari Experiences

Off-property

Hippo & Croc Cruise

Embark on a guided boat trip through the wild beauty of St. Lucia Estuary, where pods of hippos, lurking crocodiles, and birdlife create a living tapestry of the wetlands.

Horse Riding Safari

Venture across the open plains on horseback, where the quiet elegance of the ride brings you closer to roaming wildlife and the serene rhythm of the wilderness.

Clay Pigeon Shooting & Archery

Sharpen your aim and feel the thrill as expert instructors guide you to perfect every shot with skill and confidence.

Beach Fish Barbeque

Savour the flavours of the Indian Ocean with a private barbecue along 220km of pristine, protected coastline.

Conservation

At Thanda Safari, we embrace our role as devoted stewards of nature, championing biodiversity, driving impactful conservation, and uplifting local communities.

Nestled within this pristine reserve, we actively nurture endangered species, manage predators with care, and lead pioneering anti-poaching efforts in close partnership with world-class conservation organisations.

For over 20 years, the Thanda Foundation Trust has been a beacon of hope, supporting transformative programmes that safeguard the wild heart of Africa for generations to come.





Star for Life Foundation

Community

Star for Life is a unique educational initiative established in 2005 by the owners of Thanda Safari, Christin and Dan Olofsson. It has empowered over 500 000 young people in Zululand and Southern Africa to pursue their education, live healthy lives, and achieve their dreams.

The Inkanyiso and Masibambisane crèches are day-care programmes for young children in the neighbouring community, where the children receive a strong foundation from the earliest age, which paves the way for a bright future.



Inkanyiso and Masibambisane Crèche



Inkanyiso and Masibambisane Crèche

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